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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a workshop designed to lead teachers toward the use of open ended response questions rather than multiple choice items. The rationale was based on the assumption that assessment will become more authentic because it will measure depth of understanding and deal with both content and process. Authentic assessment is defined as an alternative to traditional multiple-choice standardized achievement tests involving direct examination of student performance on significant tasks that would be relevant to life outside of school. The focus of the workshop described was on participants constructing questions based on a group of generic questions or formulas into which the teacher could insert his or her own content. Workshop participants were then asked to write answers to the questions they had prepared and to construct an appropriate rubric. Three handouts guiding the workshop (Using Generic Open-Ended Response Questions, Let's Practice Writing and Scoring Open Response Questions, and Samples of Generic Questions for Adapting to Your Own Content) are included. (Author/LL)

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Preparing Teachers for Open Response Testing

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Preparing Teachers for Open Response Testing

Ann Lockledge and Judith A. Hayn

Abstract

Describes a workshop designed to lead teachers toward the use of open ended response questions rather than multiple choice items. Rationale was based on the assumption that the assessment will become more authentic because it will measure depth of understanding and deal with both content and process. Authentic or alternative assessment was defined as an alternative to traditional multiple-choice standardized achievement tests involving direct examination of student performance on significant tasks which would be relevant to life outside of school. The focus of the workshop described was on participants constructing questions based on a group of "generic questions" or formulas into which the teacher could insert his or her own content. Workshop participants were then asked to write answers to the questions they had prepared and to construct an appropriate rubric. The handouts and directions for the workshop are included.

Preparing Teachers for Open Response Testing

Ann Lockledge and Judith A. Hayn

Recently we have seen a move toward more authentic evaluation -- testing that involves students in answering the sorts of questions they might confront in the real world. Educators want to know if the student can move beyond the school setting and consider problems in a larger context. Classrooms teachers at all levels are using response journals, hands-on materials, manipulatives, projects, and portfolios. At the national level there is a move toward the use of open ended response questions rather than relying solely on multiple choice items. In some states such as North Carolina, standardized open-ended tests have been developed at each grade level for the major subject areas (Division of Accountability Services, 1992).

Authentic or alternative assessment (Worthen, 1993) is viewed as an alternative to traditional multiple-choice standardized achievement tests and involves direct examination of student performance on significant tasks that are relevant to life outside of school. Teachers have long kept anecdotal running records and folders of student work before such records were recognized as an legitimate means of direct assessment. But when the demand for accountability became coupled with increasing criticism of standardized multiple-choice tests, this way of looking at what a student had accomplished was seen as holding considerable promise. It is possible that the development of standards or rubrics for judging this type of performance has the potential for becoming divisive. That is one of the reasons that the authors felt that teachers should be prepared to develop rubrics of

their own and discus them with their students so that the children would understand the process.

In assessing depth of understanding (Newman, 1992) we must be sure that students are asked to consider alternatives and to make choices based on knowledge. They need to be working with substance and critical ideas and use persuasion or take a theoretical stance. The problem they are asked to solve should be one that is likely to be addressed in the world beyond the school

The use of open-ended questions asks students to use higher order thinking to organize or apply the knowledge they are acquiring. Open-ended responses differ from the traditional essay in that they are more pointed and require a concise answer that shows analysis of information presented, situations that develop, or problems to be confronted. This type of evaluation also requires the use of a rubric for grading. The rubric for a question sets out the standards a teacher could reasonably expect in an answer from a prepared student. It is usually based on a scale that goes from minimally acceptable to clearly understood and analyzed.

The focus of this workshop was on participants constructing open-ended questions based on that which they in fact teach and then preparing rubrics to accompany each one. Only by the consistent use of such questions can students become comfortable with the techniques for answering and teachers with the techniques for grading. Even better is when students use prepared rubrics for scoring each others writing. The assessment will become authentic because it will measure depth of understanding and deal with both content and process.

The training was based on a group of "generic questions" or formulas into which the teacher could insert his or her own content. The workshop participants were then asked to write answers to the questions they had prepared and to construct an appropriate rubric. Participants scored each other's answers in the same manner they might ask their students to try. It was suggested that another helpful technique might

be to use one generic question, teach the students the rubric and then use the same formula with different content. The first and second set of answers could be examined for progress in understanding quality answers.

REFERENCES

Division of Accountability Services. (1992). North Carolina End-of-Grade Testing. Sample scoring guide for released open ended items. Raleigh, North Carolina: Department of Public Instruction.

Newman, Fred. (1992). Authentic Assessment. Address at the National Social Studies supervisors Association, Detroit.

Worthen, B.R. Critical issues that will determine the future of alternative assessment. Phi Delta Kappan. 74. 6. 444-457.

See the April 1989 and May 1992 issues of Educational Leadership and the May 1989, May 1991, and February 1993 issues of the Phi Delta Kappan.

USING GENERIC OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Many open ended questions follow a pattern that may be used to fit the content of any grade level. Below you will find a generic question followed by possible ways to adapt it to each grade level.

1. Suppose you were asked to interview _____that _____. List three questions that you would ask him/her.

Grade 3	Mayor of your city	has just closed a playground
Grade 4	a State Senator	who is running for reelection
Grade 5	John Muir	saved the redwoods
Grade 6	John Major	is British Prime Minister
Grade 7	Nelson Mandela	spent 27 years in jail
Grade 8	Thomas Jefferson	helped write the Constitution

For the grade which you teach write a response that you might hope to see.

_____

_____

_____

2. Now score your response on a scale of 0-3 using the general Rubric at the bottom of the page.

3. Below is a another generic question. See how your group would go about adapting it to several grade levels.

__(name people)___ celebrate or observe __(name holiday)__ . Tell why this holiday is important to the people that celebrate it. Tell how the people would <u>feel</u> during this observance.

Grade 3 _____
Grade 4 _____
Grade 5 _____
Grade 6 _____
Grade 7 _____
Grade 8 _____

GENERAL RUBRIC FOR SCORING READING AND SOCIAL STUDIES RESPONSES

0 Answer is unresponsive, unrelated or inappropriate.

1. Answer deals with material on a concrete, literal level that is accurate in most dimensions.

2. Answer deals with most aspects of the question and makes correct inferences, although minor errors may exist. Comprehension is on an inferential level and the key skills are synthesis and analysis.

3. Answer addresses most aspects of the question and uses sound reasons and cites and explains appropriate examples. Uses skills of evaluation as well as analysis and synthesis.

LET'S PRACTICE WRITING AND SCORING OPEN RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Take the questions in your envelope and adapt one of them to the curriculum for each of the grade levels. (For Social Studies: 3rd-Communities; 4th-Geography 5th-Regions of U.S.; 6th Europe; 7th-Africa and Asia; 8th-United States History). Or take several questions and adapt them for the grade level you teach.

After you have written the sample questions, choose one and write an answer that you would consider acceptable from your students.

Exchange answers and score using the rubric at the bottom of the page or on the first page:

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

WRITE AN ANSWER TO ONE QUESTION:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SCORE SOMEONE ELSE'S RESPONSE BY USING THIS RUBRIC:

0 No response
1. Responded to question and attempted an explanation. Details are sparse.
2. Responded to question with a logical explanation. Includes specific details.
3. Responded to questions with extended explanation. Elaborates to back up logic.

WRITE A BETTER RUBRIC FOR A SPECIFIC QUESTION YOU WROTE:

_1- _____

_2- _____

_3- _____

SAMPLES OF GENERIC QUESTIONS FOR ADAPTING TO YOUR OWN CONTENT

SOCIAL STUDIES

Recently there have been changes in _(name place or process)___ Pick one and explain its effect on the lives of people.

Make a list of ways that _(name event)___ changed the attitudes and viewpoints of the people in _(name country or time period)__.

Wars bring hardships. Tell why the __(name war)__was difficult for _(name people)__. Explain one way someone might have tried to cope with these hardships.

Using the map(s) of _(tell type)__ resources in _(name area)__, circle an area where you would find a large city. Explain your answer.

One problem that _(identify type of person)___ must decide about is _(name problem)_. Tell what two different points of view might be.

You are assigned a report to compare the government of _____ and _____. Name three ways of doing things you would need to describe or compare.

It has been said that religious belief affects almost everything the _____ people do. Give two specific examples and explain.

All of the following statements about _(name place, person, event)___are true. Place a check beside the one you consider most important and explain your reasons for your selection.

All places change over time. The following are examples of changes taking place in _____. Choose one and explain how it will affect the lives of the people who live there.

If you were going to _(name a change)__ in __(name place)__, what are some of the factors you would have to consider?

Name two different ethnic groups who live in _____. Tell how they have tried to maintain their traditional cultural identity.

MATH

The _____ were traveling by _____. Using the map and the graph shown below, tell what a journey from _____ to _____ would have been like.

SCIENCE

In the picture of the _____ below, there are _____ items labeled. At least _____ of them are necessary for it to operate properly. Explain why ____of the items are needed.

Danny has _____ samples of _____. Tell two things he could do to find out which one of them works best . Explain why your test would give accurate information .

READING

After reading a book about the life of _____, tell why you think he chose to become a(n) _____. What things in his life made him become a great one.